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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE  
1030 Hr., 30 April 1953

WITHDRAWAL FROM LAOS OF VIET MINH UNITS REPORTED

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[redacted] elements of two Viet Minh divisions have started withdrawal from Laos towards Phu Tho, on the north-western corner of the Tonkin delta.

Comment: These troops were last reported somewhere between Xieng Khouang and the Sam Neua area. Withdrawal of "elements" might presage the departure from Laos of the divisions themselves, thus reducing enemy pressure against French defenses there and lessening the probability of a deeper enemy drive into Laos. It would indicate, if true, an increased threat to the Tonkin delta or to the French bastion at Na San.

The Viet Minh has committed less than half of its regular Tonkin forces into Laos, and the bulk of the remainder is now deployed from Na San eastward to the Tonkin delta. Thus, it already has a strong force in that area.

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